

Matthias Smock House
River Road
Piscataway Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-478 HABS

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near New Brunswick

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

HABS
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12-14 FEBRU. 1961
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Matthias Smock House
River Road
Piscataway Township, Middlesex County, New Jersey

Owner: Paige Bill L'Honnmedieu

Date of Erection: About 1720

Architect:

Builder: Matthias Smock

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: One and one-half with a one story wing

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - frame construction, clapboards

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch with dormers
of later date

Historical Data:

The first of the Smock family in America was Hendrick¹ who came to New Amsterdam about 1659; he settled at New Utrecht where he bought land in 1665. He was a magistrate and patentee. His family consisted of three sons and four daughters; two sons moved to Middlesex and one to Monmouth. Matthias² who was married in 1701 came to Piscataway Township about 1718. He built the house of the survey before he made his will in 1721. The house descended to his second son John³, born 1712, died 1791. After the death of John, the property came into the possession of his grandson, also

John⁵, who died intestate. There was a division of land between the heirs of John which is told in a deed dated April 1, 1843 when Jonathan B. Smock conveyed a tract of about sixty acres to Martin D. Nevius. John⁵ Smock had three children, one of these died leaving her share to the two remaining children. In the division of the estate Jonathan B. received the southern portion of the property and Martin D. Nevius, who had married Deborah Ann Smock, a sister of Jonathan, received the portion with the homestead. It remained in the Nevius family until 1909.

The present owner is the fourth to hold title since the property passed out of the hands of the descendants of the original builder. He acquired title in 1927.

Bibliography:

Bailey, Rosalie P. Pre-Revolutionary Dutch Houses and Families in Northern New Jersey and Southern New York New York, William Morrow and Company, 1936

Vermule, C. C. "Maritan Landing That Was" Proceedings New Jersey Historical Society Vol. 54, Pages 85 and 197

A search of Middlesex County court records by Frank P. Caulfield, Essex County Office

Katherine C. Rutt
Supervising Historian

Approved:

Seymour Williams
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.
District Officer

A D D E N D U M

A search of the records at Trenton reveals a will of Matthias Smock which he made on October 2, 1721. In this he gives to his wife Elizabeth "all and singular my lands and tenements". He gives to his two sons Hendrick and John "all my real estate to be equally divided between them". When John Smock died his will dated April 4, 1791 gives to his wife Sirhe "the use of all my estate both real and personal as long as she shall remain my wife or widow". He stipulates that after the death or the marriage of his wife half of it shall go to a daughter Sarah Underdunk and the other half to a daughter Mary Ree. This doesn't agree with the statement of Miss Bailey that the property descended to his grandson John, nor does it explain the division of land between the heirs of this grandson John Smock which is told in the deed of 1848. It is impossible to tell what happened in this case unless the grandson John Underdunk mentioned in the will of 1791 as the recipient of 100E changed his name to Smock.

Bibliography:

A search of records in the Secretary of State's Office by Robert H. Falcey,
Mercer County Office



Supervising Historian